DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 423 EA 027 657

AUTHOR Isaacs, Madelyn L.; And Others
TITLE Full Participation: A Useful Paradigm for School Self-Renewal.
PUB DATE 28 Dec 95
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Diversity (Institutional); *Educational Change; Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; *Educational Theories; Elementary Secondary Education; Humanistic Education; Inclusive Schools; Individualized Instruction; Role Conflict

ABSTRACT

As education engages in reform at all levels, an underlying theme of inclusive participation in reform has emerged. School renewal needs to be based on recognition of some unifying principles or a paradigm that will coherently direct renewal. The new paradigm is conceptualized in terms of a change from the homogeneous, melting-pot philosophy to one of diversity, collaboration, and inclusion. The new paradigm promotes the concept that the educational experiences among all children may differ. It values those differences. The shift to the new paradigm is seen in increased parental and community participation in education, increased efforts at inclusion for all students, and a drive toward participatory leadership in administration. The full-participation paradigm is complemented by a systems view that examines the effects of interacting roles on the system. Barriers to successful school self-renewal include lack of support for inservice time, the movement to nationalize curriculum, larger class sizes, and centralized micromanagement. Teacher education programs can define teacher roles around the individualization of education and explain how it affects teacher accountability and success. (Contains 16 references.) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 396 423

FULL PARTICIPATION: A USEFUL PARADIGM FOR SCHOOL SELF-RENEWAL

MADELYN L. ISAACS
Assistant Professor, Psychological and Social Foundations of Education

MARCI GREENE
Assistant Professor, Special Education

THOMAS VALESKY
Professor, Educational Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA AT FORT MYERS

December 28, 1995

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Greene

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

EA027657

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Madelyn L. Isaacs is a faculty member of graduate Counselor Education as well as of learning theory/developmental psychology courses for undergraduate teacher training. Her other activities have involved higher education administration and developing programs to enrich and enhance minority and disadvantaged public school students in southwest Florida through the Public Schools Enrichment Partnership.

Marci Greene is a faculty member in Special Education and has experience in early intervention programs and inclusion methods for systems and educators. She has also worked at the district level to develop Special Education programs and regional partnerships in the United States and South America.

Tom Valesky is a faculty member in Educational Leadership whose focus has been on technology in education, participatory leadership and school reform. He has been active with regional and national professional administrator organizations and with innovative training programs in school systems.

All three faculty are involved in multidisciplinary research on the effects and implications of inclusion on educators and their training.

FULL PARTICIPATION: A USEFUL PARADIGM FOR SCHOOL SELF-RENEWAL

ABSTRACT

As education engages in reform at all levels, an underlying theme of inclusive participation in reform efforts has emerged. This hypothesis is evidenced by examples of increased parental and community participation in education, increased efforts at inclusion for all students, and a drive toward participatory leadership in administration. While accepting the hypothesis that full participation has been embraced by many sectors of education, this article proposes that a paradigm of full participation be used to guide reform for the future.

> Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself. (Dewey, 1990)

Some 90 years ago John Dewey philosophized about the relationship between the interests of society and the purposes of education. Through many changes and periods of sacrifice and growth, Dewey's words again direct us to consider the underlying philosophy of American education and how that philosophy can direct school reform and renewal.

Dewey's viewpoint was

> That which interests us most is naturally the progress made by the individual child of our acquaintance, his normal physical development, his advance in ability to read, write, and figure, his growth in the knowledge of geography and history, improvement in manners, habits of promptness, order and industry--it is from such standards as these that we judge the work of the school. (Dewey, 1990, p 6-7).

We see evidence of a movement toward the individualization of education as a major component of full participation by all individuals in society. We also believe that this can be observed clearly in the reform and renewal taking place at the school level. Nowhere in education are individual children's needs and educational interests more immediate or more germaine to the reformers than at the school level. We believe too that such reform and renewal is evidence of a paradigm shift in modern educational practice. If educators accept this "natural interest" as the fuel for the engine of change, then we believe that it can be successfully implemented through an engine which promotes full participation in that change process.

Change in education

It almost seems like we have become "change junkies" who change for the sake of it. One definition of learning is: that which creates permanent or lasting change in behavior or attitude; thus education itself has been doing a great deal of learning. This rate of change has its roots in the 1980's when there were a multitude of mandated changes attempting to respond to the imperatives of A Nation at Risk:The Imperative for Educational Reform (1983). These mandated changes based in Social Darwinism were seen as a paradigm shift at that time. Examples of these changes were abundant: increased accountability, increased graduation standards, higher teacher certification standards and other similar mandates around the nation. In hindsight these changes appear to be more transitory as we are now to be moving back to egalitarian concepts such as participatory management, inclusion and partnerships.

For many, the purposes of these numerous changes experienced in the last two decades are "clear as mud". Such changes often results in programs that add to the overwhelmed and overworked sense which many educators share today. Asked to do more and more with less and less (time, training, and money) many experience burnout or resignation on the job. Changes, whether imposed from without or generated from within, look to be unrelated and non-systematic without a clear focus. However, recent changes can be less overwhelming and more coherent when viewed as moving toward a singular goal - a paradigm which speaks to full participation as the method of achieving educational goals for the individual child. It is one that would likely serve school-based reformers well as they consider school reform goals.

Historically, changes occuring without recognition of the overall paradigm shift have resulted in more regulation, more paperwork, more external accountability with less ability to be internally accountable, more evaluation, more requirements and accommodation of students in rigid systems, more consultation with less training on how to be or use consultants, more individualized instruction, more meetings, more to do. There has not been a comprehensive review of teacher and educator roles, simply an increase in the boundaries of these roles. Furthermore, stakeholders have been negatively impacted by this confusing growth. Parents get drawn into debates when they are asked to participate and then find themselves in adversarial relationships where coercion and power seem the only solutions.

The purpose of this article is to encourage school renewal based on recognition of some unifying principles or paradigm which will direct renewal coherently.

Furthermore, it is to suggest that a useful paradigm for renewal is already emergent in current educational practice - "full participation."

Why a paradigm for renewal?

A paradigm, according to Kuhn (1970), is an overarching set of principles or single principle through which we view all other actions. Based in its original Greek meaning, paradigm (from the paradeigma) offers us the advantage of "knowing before". More recently, Guba (1990) defined paradigm as a set of beliefs that guide action.

The utility of identifying a paradigm is in its clarification of the unity of underlying relationships to the thoughts and resulting actions of change makers. More importantly paradigms are windows to individual and group constructions of reality. Change and action are directed by individual or group notions of reality as it is or reality as a paradigm directs it should be. It is thus prudent to enter into discussions with all stakeholders to identify first the paradigm or view of reality which they represent and second the goals which such paradigms imply. By thus identifying the paradigm, all participants get a bird's eye view of the world as others see it and can search for commonalities among their world views. When the process begins with goal setting instead, it is presuming that all accept the same reality and paradigm. This may not only be false presumption, but can lead to contentiousness between change participants who must fight for their goals as a way of pressing their view of reality. Ultimately, some stakeholders will disenfranchise from the process which will undermine change.

The Evident Paradigm in Contemporary Education

While there have been many paradigms in education over the last century, a review of recent events and actions reveal a contemporary shift to a paradigm which is especially well-suited to school self-renewal - Full Participation. Evidence for this shift appears when disjointed actions and events are viewed synchronously. One educational observer noted that "paradigm shifts are difficult to comprehend because they change our ways of seeing and understanding everything around us." (Barrow, 1991, p. 51). This *new* paradigm can be defined as a change from the homogeneous, melting pot philosophy to one of diversity, collaboration, and inclusion. In this case we move from a system in which all children and their educational experiences are homogenized. Those who could not fit in were hidden or separated by a system that put all children through the narrow eye of the same needle (Gardner, 1983). The new emerging paradigm focuses on the concept that all children and their educational experiences may be different and that differences are prized and cultivated rather than hidden or shunned (Lipsky & Gartner, 1992; Stainbach, Stainbach & Bunch, 1989). The shifts are most evident in new mandates, new models and new methods being proposed for practice and currently gaining acceptance throughout education

The compelling evidence of a paradigm shift in education includes movements toward inclusion and diversity; parent participation and partnerships; school-based accountability for outcomes; teaming among school staff for child study and educational planning; flexible funding initiatives; full service schools; authentic and portfolio assessment; community involvement in schools; communtiy/school responsibility for school and readiness, and especially; school-based reform and site-based decision

making. Thus this paradigm is evidenced by school self-renewal and can make school self-renewal a more successful reality.

School Renewal and The Nature of Change

We know that change is healthy for organizations, and year after year, schools are faced with new innovations. The most successful at change have followed a strategy of organizational self-renewal (normative reeducative strategies). In contrast, the less successful have followed models based on outside sanctions to change (power-coercive strategies), or models based on new knowledge or successful past practices (empirical-rational strategies). The least successful models are those which are power-coercive. This may be due to their lack of participation by stakeholders and by their lack of singular paradigm which drives change at the school level.

The success of change models based on self-renewal (normative-reeducative strategy) may be in their inherent process which shuns change imposed from the outside, focusing on internal problem-solving ability and willingness of school staff to control or direct change. Owen (1994) describes for us the a self-renewing school as one that is able to

> (1) sense and identify emerging problems, (2) establish goals, objectives, and priorities, (3) generate valid alternative solutions, and (4) implement a selected alternative. An outcome of renewal processes is to shift the culture of the school from emphasis on traditional routines and bureaucratic rigidity toward a culture that actively supports the view that much of the knowledge needed to plan and

carry out change in schools is possesses by people in the schools themselves. (p. 223)

Fullan (1993) also supported this notion of change from within when he urged caution of change by mandates, since the gains may be short-lived. In further support of self-renewal strategies for change, Kuhn (1990) noted that "if a paradigm is ever to triumph, it must gain first, supporters...who will develop it....At the start a new candidate for paradigm may have few supporters, and on occasion the supporter's motives may be suspect. Nevertheless if they are competent they will improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it" (pp.18-19).

Empirical support for the self-renewal strategies of change are found in the Rand Studies of the late 1970's that assessed the outcomes of educational change efforts. Endorsed by the U.S. Office of Education, Berman and McLaughlin (1978) that power-coercive and empirical-rational strategies did not succeed without a climate of self-renewal in the school. In a discussion of their findings, Sarason (1982) found that ineffective strategies noted included outside consultants; packaged management approaches; one-shot preimplementation training; pay for training; and formal evaluation. For schools to successfully implement change they had to have a positive school climate with all stakeholders included which means good working relationships among teachers and the active support of the principal. These effective strategies included

Concrete, teacher-specific, and extended training.

Classroom assistance from project or district staff.

Teacher observation of similar projects in other classrooms, schools, or districts.

Regular project meetings that focused on practical problems.

Teacher participation in project decisions.

Local materials development.

Principal participation in training. (p. 77).

We propose adding identification of a singular paradigm to the above process and that an effective paradigm be full participation in learning, teaching and leadership. For example, schools are increasingly looking at non-academic areas of concern, e.g., self-esteem, family building, parenting training, and full-service schools without having a clear sense of how these fit into an overall scheme.

Planning for the Impact of Change on Individuals in the System

The most useful perspective for evaluating the impact of change on individuals is from a systems framework. This begins with an examination of how each functional role interacts and affects one another and how balance is maintained overall. Pre-service and in-service training cannot adequately keep up with the demands of program and role changes which are usually immediate reactions to coercive mandates and thus never systematically considered.

We see evidence of both conflict and ambiguity in the roles of the modern educational system when they evolve from multiple and separate coercive mandates. Roles are defined as a set of behaviors which are appropriate for a given individual in a specific interactive situation. Williams and Huber (1986) note that when we are

fulfilling many roles there is increased opportunity for confusion of roles which can be disastrous. Furthermore, role performance is as much controlled by skills, motivation and aptitude as it is by perceptions about one's roles. Perceptions of role expectations are strongly influenced by ambiguity (lack of information and models for expected behavior) and conflict (demands of two or more roles that are in conflict). Teachers are losing role definition as they move toward more individually and diversely defined responsibilities for student learning as well as for content presentation. Principals must not only be instructional experts but savvy fiscal managers and consumer relations experts. Counselors may assume leadership and consultation roles for child study to ferret out student needs and determine how these needs might be best satisfied in the current context. All educators are increasingly required to be accountable to different constituencies for more tasks.

This overlap of roles and diffusion which results from unclear boundaries and too many separate expectations leads to the loss of human resources, and to stress and burnout. Ineffective performance grows from the conflicts and ambiguity of role confusion.

Without full participation of stakeholders and establishing a systems view, role ambiguity and conflict will continue to be a pervasive problem in education. The systems view is enhanced by recognition and identification of the paradigm(s) which are defining its components and its boundaries. The underpinnings of roles are the written and unwritten expectations which form the boundaries of behavior and

standards for success. It is in this area we see the greatest impact of the implicit paradigms in reform on everyday lives of educators and other stakeholders

The Paradigm Shift to Full Participation

As noted, we are convinced that the current trneds in change evidence potential movement toward full participation. Although many examples of an emerging paradigm seem abundantly clear, there are also evident forces constraining full movement and acceptance of these unifying principles. Many of these constraints are remnants of the crisis created by A Nation at Risk. These are often the same barriers to successful self-renewal and include:

An outmoded calendar and schedule for education that prevents full participation by all stakeholders;

Insufficient in-service time, and availability of funding;

A movement toward national curriculum and teacher certification;

Class sizes growing bigger in the face of seemingly contrasting research;

Unfunded and underfunded mandates which see districts suing states for equity;

Centralized micromanagment;

A reactive bureaucracy without visionary leadership.

Individual changes from "separate entities" to "full participation" apparently have many commonalities though they have not been guided a priori by a single principle or paradigm. State and district-level policy makers need to examine the effects of these barriers on individual schools. At the same time, school-level decision-makers need to look beyond individual programs. The notion of Gestalt, the whole being greater than

the sum of its parts, seems especially relevant. With a solid foundation and guiding principle, the whole becomes more clear and manageable than when we try to separately construct visions and implement them throughout education. Such compartmentalization creates an uncomfortable effect on the teacher who does not have the luxury of such singular focus and clarity. The classroom teacher and building principal, as examples, must manage all of these pieces simultaneously. The notion of Gestalt, the integration of awareness of the many demands and the observation of how these elements interrelate as a coherent system, supports the need for an articulated paradigm. Especially since the area of teacher and administrator control and input for these changes is most *critical* in self-renewal and school based reform.

Conclusion

As we observe the problems affiliated with mandated, nonsystematic change (e.g., from clear and precise role prescriptions to overwhelming role enlargement; and from a clear understanding of the balance inherent in the system to seemingly unmanageable parts with no system apparent), we sense an urgency to identify the underlying coherence of paradigm. In this way the paradigm shift reflected by contemporary change theory, i.e., a shift from mandated change to participatory change, will meet the challenge of satisfying the problems created by past piecemeal coercive change as schools begin to build a coherent program based on their needs and paradigm for education.

Educational policy and practice that can be positively affected by recognition of the paradigm shift are evident. For example, a recent review of the implementation of

Site Based Decision Making (Etheridge, Horgan, Valesky, Hall, Terrell, 1994) cited Kuhn's notion of paradigm shift. Their research identified a paradigm shift "away from the factory model of school management." (p. 129). Others have noted the change and identified such shifts in beliefs (see Astuto, et al., 1994; David, 1991; Foster, 1991).

Teacher education programs can begin to recognize the paradigm shift by defining teacher roles around individualization of education and how it impacts teacher accountability and success. Training of school administrators can be enhanced by making the paradigm the central focus of its preparation programs. For example, by looking at the basic premise of inclusion and individual needs, laws, financial management, teacher hiring and supervision, community involvement, leadership styles, learning styles, and curricular design, we can place these elements in a singular, systematic context. Counselor responsibilities as advocates and practitioners can focus on inclusion and full access for children using a multitude of strategies. Parents and other community stakeholders can fully participate as equal partners with an appreciation of the overall goals of education. In all of these cases training will then better prepare each for their role in school reform and renewal and proactive participants rather than reactive participants.

When the underlying paradigm shifts, it is like an earthquake which shakes the foundation and walls of any organizational or individual structural framework. As wisely noted in their recent review of educational reform, Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree and Fernandez (1994), listed the elements required for successful and authentic reform.

individual to institutional responsibility for achievement;

instrumentality to entitlement;

control to empowerment;

the inevitability to the interruptability of outcomes;

bureaucracy to democracy;

commonality to diversity;

interconnected services to open, comprehensive child and family services;

competition to collaboration;

intervention to facilitation. (p. 87)

These elements are entirely relfective of a full participation paradigm. As Kuhn and others already know, effective change or recognition of a paradigm shift requires participant acceptance and willingness to work toward the goals of the paradigm. This too is true for school self-renewal as well. Astuto et al. (1994). note, "The real reformers are in the schools and communities of this country now. If they cannot be trusted to lead the reform, no amount of external mandates and controls will work" (p. 84).

If Full Participation is the paradigm shift occurring today as we see it is, then professional educators must agree that it is a goal worthy of vigorous reform. If we cannot agree that this is our most appropriate goal, then our most fruitful discussions can be to define the direction which our paradigm must follow before we attempt any more reform at the school, District, State or National levels. In this way we will serve accomplish all objectives - those set by change agenda and those set by overall goals -

in one, more coherent step. It assures the participation of the most important stakeholders.

REFERENCES

Astuto, Terry A., Clark, David L., Read, Anne-Marie, McGree, Kathleen and Fernandez, L. deKoven Pelton. *Roots of Reform: Challenging the Assumptions that Control Educational Reformers*, Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1994.

Barrow, Clyde. W. *The Theory of Capitalist Regulation and the Development of Higher Education.* Washington D. C.: ERIC Clearinghouse, Document Number 332-607, 1991.

Berman, Paul and McLaughlin, Milbrey W. *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Vol. VIII: Implementing and Sustaining Innovations,* Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1978.

Dewey, John. *The School and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Etheridge, Carol Plata, Horgan, Dianne, Valesky, Thomas, Hall, Mary Lee, and Terrell, Lennell. *Challenge to Change: The Memphis Experience with School-Based Decision-Making*, Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1994.

Fullan, Michael. *Change Forces: Probing the Depth of Educational Reform*, London: Farmer Press.

Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Guba, Egon G. *The Paradigm Dialog*, Newberry Park: California, 1990.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Lipsky, Dorothy K. and Gartner, Alan. "Achieving Full Inclusion: Placing the Student at the Center of Educational Reform." In William Stainbach & Susan Stainbach, Eds., *Controversial Issues Confronting Special Education: Divergent Perspectives*, Needham Hts, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1992.

Owens, Robert. *Organizational Behavior in Education*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1990.

Sarason, Seymour. *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, Boston: Allyn Bacon, 1982.

Stainbach, Susan, Stainbach, William and Bunch, Gary. "A Rationale for the Merger of Regular Education and Special Education." In Susan Stainbach, William Stainbach &

Marsha Forest, *Educating All Children in the Mainstream*, Baltimore: Paul H. Brooke, 1989.

Williams, J. Clifton, and Huber, George. P. *Human Behavior in Organizations,* Cincinnati: Southwestern, 1986 .

Young, Robert E. *Critical Theory of Education*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1990.